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Serial No. 10/698,920
Examiner Amina S. Khan
Art Unit 1751

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CLAIMS

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of cleaning fabrics in an automatic consumer-operated laundering apparatus, comprising:

providing a wash chamber in the automatic consumer-operated laundering apparatus for receiving a fabric load to be cleaned and a wash liquor composition, wherein the wash liquor composition comprises a substantially non-reactive, non-aqueous, non-oleophilic, apolar working fluid and at least one washing adjuvant, and wherein the wash chamber is capable of being rotated in one direction for a period of time and in the opposite direction for a period of time to complete an oscillation cycle;

introducing the fabric load and the wash liquor composition into the wash chamber;

initiating a plurality of oscillations of the wash chamber to clean the fabric load;

removing a majority of the wash liquor composition from the fabric load following completion of the plurality of oscillations; and

providing a stream of air through the wash chamber to substantially remove any remaining amount of the wash liquor composition in contact with the fabric load.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said non-reactive, nonaqueous, non-oleophilic, apolar working fluid comprises a fluid having a KB value less than approximately 30; a surface tension less than approximately 35 dynes/cm²; and a solubility in water less than 10%.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one washing adjuvant is selected from the group consisting of: builders, surfactants, enzymes, bleach activators, bleach catalysts, bleach boosters, bleaches, alkalinity sources, antibacterial agents, colorants, perfumes, pro-perfumes, finishing aids, lime soap dispersants, composition malodor control agents, odor neutralizers, polymeric dye transfer inhibiting agents, crystal growth inhibitors, photobleaches, heavy metal ion sequestrants, anti-tarnishing agents, antimicrobial agents, anti-oxidants, linkers,

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anti-redeposition agents, electrolytes, pH modifiers, thickeners, abrasives, divalent or trivalent ions, metal ion salts, enzyme stabilizers, corrosion inhibitors, diamines or polyamines or alkoxyates, suds stabilizing polymers, solvents, process aids, fabric softening agents, optical brighteners, hydrotropes, water, suds or foam suppressors, suds or foam boosters, fabric softeners, antistatic agents, dye fixatives, dye abrasion inhibitors, anti-crocking agents, wrinkle reduction agents, wrinkle resistance agents, soil release polymers, soil repellency agents, sunscreen agents, anti-fade agents and mixtures thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one washing adjuvant further comprises a surfactant having a hydrophilic-lipophilic balance from approximately 3 to 14.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of reversing the direction of rotation of the wash chamber in a manner which will change the surface of the fabric exposed to the air stream.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the air stream passing through the wash chamber is induced by a blower on the downstream side of the washing chamber and which is constructed and arranged to decrease the absolute pressure in the chamber, and whereby the ratio of the vapor pressure to the total pressure is increased.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising a step of passing said wash liquor composition through a membrane filter.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 including the step of cooling the wash liquor composition to a degree which solidifies any water present to facilitate its removal by the membrane filter.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 further comprising a step wherein the wash liquor composition is cooled prior to passing through the membrane filter.

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10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising a step of passing said working fluid through a permeate filter.
11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising a step of cooling the wash liquor composition prior to passing through to a degree which solidifies any water present to facilitate its removal by the permeate filter.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising a step of providing a final cycle after the step wherein the working fluid is cooled prior to passing to the permeate filter.
13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:
the working fluid is selected from the group of: fluoroinerts, hydrofluoroethers, perfluorocarbons, fluorinated hydrocarbons, Class 3-A solvents, polysiloxanes, and mixtures thereof; and
the temperature of the wash chamber does not exceed the flash point of the working fluid.
- 14-23. (Previously Canceled)
24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of oscillating the wash chamber in a manner which will change the surface of the fabric exposed to the air stream, while providing a stream of air through the wash chamber.
25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising a step of cooling the wash liquor composition to reduce the solubility of water in the wash liquor.
26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the wash liquor composition is cooled before filtering.
27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:
the working fluid is selected from the group of: fluoroinerts, hydrofluoroethers, perfluorocarbons, fluorinated hydrocarbons, Class 3-A solvents, polysiloxanes, and mixtures

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thereof; and

the working fluid has a flash point that ranges from about 140°F to about 200°F.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising a step of cooling the wash liquor composition to reduce the solubility of water in the wash liquor prior to passing through the permeate filter.

29. (Previously Presented) A method of cleaning fabrics in an automatic consumer-operated laundering apparatus, comprising:

providing a wash chamber in the automatic consumer-operated laundering apparatus for receiving a fabric load to be cleaned and a wash liquor composition, wherein the wash liquor composition comprises a substantially non-reactive, non-aqueous, non-oleophilic, apolar working fluid and at least one washing adjuvant, and wherein the wash chamber is capable of being rotated in one direction for a period of time, and in the opposite direction for a period of time to complete an oscillation cycle;

introducing the fabric load and the wash liquor composition into the wash chamber;

initiating a plurality of oscillations which are random, in at least one of speed and duration of each oscillation, to clean the fabric load;

removing a majority of the wash liquor composition from the fabric load following completion of the plurality of oscillations; and

providing a stream of air through the wash chamber to substantially remove any remaining amount of the wash liquor composition in contact with the fabric load.

30. (Previously Presented) A method of cleaning fabrics in an automatic consumer-operated laundering apparatus, comprising:

providing a wash chamber in the automatic consumer-operated laundering apparatus for receiving a fabric load to be cleaned and a wash liquor composition, wherein the wash liquor composition comprises a substantially non-reactive, non-aqueous, non-oleophilic, apolar working fluid and at least one washing adjuvant, and wherein the wash chamber is capable of being rotated in one direction for a period of time, and in the opposite direction for a period of

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time to complete an oscillation cycle;

introducing the fabric load and the wash liquor composition into the wash chamber;

initiating a plurality of oscillations to clean the fabric load;

removing a majority of the wash liquor composition from the fabric load following completion of the plurality of oscillations;

initiating a plurality of oscillations which are random, in at least one of speed and duration of each oscillation, to dry the fabric load; and

providing a stream of air through the wash chamber to substantially remove any remaining amount of the wash liquor composition in contact with the fabric load.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

identifying the working fluid composition in the wash liquor composition; and

adjusting the temperature of the wash chamber, wherein adjustment of the temperature of the wash chamber is based on at least the identification of the working fluid in the wash chamber.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the adjustment of the temperature of the wash chamber is further based on the concentration of the working fluid in the wash chamber.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein:

the working fluid is selected from the group of: fluoroinerts, hydrofluoroethers, perfluorocarbons, fluorinated hydrocarbons, Class 3-A solvents, polysiloxanes, and mixtures thereof; and

the temperature of the wash chamber does not exceed the flash point of the working fluid.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the working fluid comprises polysiloxane.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the temperature of the wash

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chamber does not exceed a maximum temperature of about 30°F below the flash point of the working fluid.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the temperature of the wash chamber is adjusted by a heater control in response at least to a sensor that senses the concentration of the working fluid.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein:

the working fluid is selected from the group of: fluoroinerts, hydrofluoroethers, perfluorocarbons, fluorinated hydrocarbons, Class 3-A solvents, polysiloxanes, and mixtures thereof; and

the working fluid has a flash point that is greater than about 145°F.